

Asheville-Buncombe Homeless Coalition
Meeting Minutes: April 6, 2010
Haywood Street Congregation

Welcome: Brian Alexander welcomed the group and March meeting minutes were approved.

Agency Updates:

- *Pisgah Legal Services:* The new SOAR caseworker (Cecilia) has been hired and started today.
- *Homeward Bound:* Fran Harvey has resigned, and Brian Alexander has been named Executive Director.
- *Oasis House:* The new home, Lifeboat House, has just opened and has beds available. (Located at 400 Caribou Street.)

Hands On: Sarah Wohlmuth presented Hands On, which is a United Way program that maintains an online database of local volunteer opportunities (www.handsonasheville.org), as an avenue for prospective volunteers to get connected. Agencies should contact Sarah to partner with Hands On and list specific volunteer opportunities with them. (255.0696, ext. 311, or sarah.wohlmuth@unitedwayabc.org).

Haywood Street Congregation: Brian Combs presented the work he's doing through the United Methodist Church, based on the needs & requests he heard from people experiencing homelessness. His congregation worships on Wednesdays at 12:30 p.m., with a community meal from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.; Church of the Advocate's clothing closet has moved to Haywood Street; and they've started a community garden. They want to complement the work that the Coalition is doing, not duplicate anything. Rob Blackburn from Central United Methodist also spoke, saying that Central UM wants to be a downtown church that's involved, and that they manage the Haywood Street location and currently have non-profit office space available.

Point-in-Time Count: Our final AHAR has been submitted to HUD with numbers pulled directly from HMIS, and HUD will present aggregate data to Congress. Our final Point-in-Time numbers this year indicate that 516 people are experiencing homelessness, with 187 experiencing chronic homelessness. Including transitional housing, facilities, and permanent, supportive housing, 894 people are accessing our homeless service system.

HUD Studies: Robin Merrell presented new information released by HUD, with data indicating that permanent, supportive housing costs the same as emergency shelters, and that transitional housing is more costly than either of those. We should be sure we're using transitional housing appropriately for the people who will most benefit from it, and this data reinforce that we should be directing our resources more towards permanent, supportive housing than towards emergency shelter.

Continuum of Care: Jeff Staudinger (City of Asheville's Community Development Director) proposed a change in our CoC grant process. Pisgah Legal Services has been coordinating the grant, but Robin has been mentoring Amy the past several years, and the City is proposing that the grant go through the Homeless Initiative Coordinator, rather than through PLS, starting now, since CoC is likely to become a block grant in the future. Robin moved to support that proposal, Valerie Collins seconded the motion, and the proposal was approved.

Next Regular Meeting: May 4, 2010 at 12:30 p.m. at the VA Medical Center.